

YouthTruth 101

User Guide



YouthTruth | LISTEN. LEARN. IMPROVE

YouthTruth.org

WHY YOUTHTRUTH?



YouthTruth was founded on the simple principle that student voice matters. YouthTruth’s research-backed surveys of the student experience invite young people to give candid, anonymous feedback to adults, and they are designed to yield actionable insights that can be applied to drive real-world, real-school change.

When you choose to work with YouthTruth, you join a national movement fueled by the belief that listening to students is both the strategic *and* the right thing to do. Founded in 2008, YouthTruth is the pioneering organization operating at the intersection of student voice and school improvement. YouthTruth takes a distinct approach that avoids monitoring, screening, or employing surveys as just another way to evaluate individual students. Instead, we seek out feedback from students as experts on the school experience to focus our efforts on schools and creating environments where all students have the opportunity to learn and thrive.

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YouthTruth regularly tests its surveys for validity and reliability to ensure accuracy. Additionally, independent experts have demonstrated the efficacy of our surveys in predicting academic outcomes and student well-being. So too does YouthTruth regularly solicit feedback from educators and students to fine-tune our survey items with the input of those who best know the daily life of schools, aiming to make them even more useful.

YouthTruth’s elementary-, middle-, and high-school surveys of the student experience (grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) are the cornerstone of every YouthTruth partnership. Most school systems also adopt YouthTruth’s staff and family surveys. Together, student, family, and staff surveys are a cohesive suite that can catalyze a district-wide culture of learning from feedback.

YouthTruth displays your survey data in state-of-the-art online interactive reports that visualize your data, making the analytic process intuitive. YouthTruth reports provide a built-in national comparative dataset, and they are designed to support equity of opportunity by providing displays of your data disaggregated by a wide range of demographic variables. In this way, you can easily see if your schools are meeting the needs of specific student groups.

The YouthTruth experience is highly personalized; every YouthTruth partner has a dedicated team that gets to know you and your schools. Your YouthTruth team works together to guide you at each phase of your engagement. Every YouthTruth engagement includes a data debrief, and most of our partners also choose to add data coaching sessions for principals. A hallmark of the YouthTruth experience are YouthTruth’s virtual and in-person workshops that bring together school leaders, students, and/or community members to generate insights from your data, set goals, and develop action plans. We also provide our partners access to the YouthTruth Backpack, a suite of resources including practical support materials to help you turn your survey data into action.

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PHASE 1: GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Have a conversation with your Partnership Lead about your goals for gathering feedback. Define the scope of your engagement, choose your additional topics, and schedule your survey window (there is one each month, October through June).



PHASE 2: ONBOARDING PROCESS

Work with a dedicated Client Services team member who will guide you through the survey preparation and data gathering process. Your Client Services team member will prepare a tailored pre-survey launch video to support your school leaders and your survey implementation contacts so that your data collection will be a success. Your Client Services team member will also introduce you to the YouthTruth Survey Implementation Guide – which provides step-by-step instructions, templates, and resources for communicating with your community to build trust and increase your survey response rates.



PHASE 3: GATHER FEEDBACK

Use YouthTruth's convenient survey links created for you to gather feedback from students, families and staff. Enjoy access to – and support from – your dedicated Client Services lead throughout the surveying process. Get personalized response-rate updates from your Client Services lead, and track your progress in real time.



PHASE 4: YOUR REPORTS ARE READY!

Ten business days after you finish surveying, your Client Services lead will alert you and your school leaders that your reports have been published to your online YouthTruth report library. The email will include a link to schedule your data debrief and any advisory services with your Partnership Lead, which may include a Principal Workshop, Student Voice Workshop, or a Community Workshop.



PHASE 5: MAKE MEANING OF YOUR DATA

In your data debrief, your Partnership Lead will provide highlights of your results and help you to become an expert in navigating and interpreting your YouthTruth reports. You will get tips on next steps, and specific advice on closing the feedback loop with your community. You will also work with your Partnership Lead to plan and schedule any additional advisory services, which will be designed to meet your needs and support your goals.



PHASE 6: KEEP LISTENING!

Use the resources in the YouthTruth Backpack to work through the YouthTruth data action cycle (set goals, make meaning of your data, plan for improvement, and close the feedback loop with empathetic communication and courageous conversations). Continue to enjoy ongoing access to your dedicated Partnership Lead as you turn your data into action and plan for next year's survey.